

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 6-11, 13-18, 20 and 21 are presently active in this case, Claims 1, 8, 10 and 15 having been amended and Claims 5, 12 and 19 having been cancelled by the present amendment. No new matter is added.

In the outstanding Official Action, Claims 1, 8 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Sata et al. (JP 3-52377, herein “Sata”); Claims 2-4, 9-11 and 16-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Sata in view of APA; Claims 6, 13 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Sata; Claims 7, 14 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Sata in view of Yamada (U.S. Pat. No. 5,812,172); and Claims 5, 12 and 19 were objected to as depending on a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Initially, Applicants gratefully acknowledge the early indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 5, 12 and 19.

Accordingly, Applicants have cancelled allowable Claims 5, 12 and 19 have incorporated the allowable features recited therein into independent Claims 1, 8 and 15, respectively.

As a result, Applicants respectfully submit that in light of the incorporation of allowable subject matter, Claims 1, 8 and 15 patentably distinguish over Sata, Yamada and APA considered individually or in combination.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

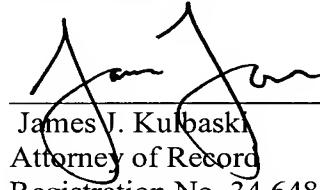
Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.

Customer Number

22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 08/07)



James J. Kulbaski
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 34,648

James Love
Registration No. 58,421

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